

Lake Okeechobee Interagency Task Force Meeting Proceedings

The following individuals attended the Lake Okeechobee Interagency Task Force meeting on Wednesday, March 17, 2004 at the South Florida Water Management District Okeechobee Service Center in Okeechobee, Florida.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

Ryan Peck – South Florida Operations Office

Angie Huebner - South Florida Operations Office

Richard Bailey - South Florida Operations Office

Jeremy Crossland - South Florida Operations Office

Charlie Ashton – Jacksonville District Office

Applied Aquatic Management, Incorporated (AAM)

Roger Beard - AAM on-site supervisor

P J Myers

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)

Don Fox

South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)

Steve Smith

Mike Bodle

Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Jaqueline Smith

Palm Beach County Environmental Resource Management PBC-ERM

Barbara Bobsein

General Public

Raymond Jones

John Welsh

1. Public Comment Period

Website Update – USACE

Members of the public suggested adding the interagency meeting minutes, agenda and fish tournaments dates to the Lake Okeechobee website.

2. Status Report of Spray Program

Roger Beard (AAM on-site supervisor) reported spray crews have treated approximately 1,060 acres of water hyacinth and water lettuce since the last interagency meeting. The majority of the work was completed in the following

areas: King's Bar, Eagle Bay Island, Government Cut, Chancy Bay, Harney Pond Canal to Pearce Canal, Pearce Canal to Eagle Bay Island, Fisheating Creek, Monkey Box to Spoil Islands, Moore Haven Canal, Ritta Island to Houseboat Cut, Coot Bay, Pelican Bay, Dead River, Bay Bottom, Boy Scout Cut and the rim canal.

3. Report of Aerial Survey of Floating Vegetation on Lake

An aerial flight was conducted on Friday 12 March. The lake elevation on this date was 15.21 ft msl. The average estimate of treatable floating vegetation on Lake Okeechobee was 433 acres. Areas of concern include Harney Pond Canal to the Kissimmee River, King's Bar and Chancy Bay (see Attachment 1).

4. Old Business

Torry and Kreamer Island Restoration Project Update – FWC and SFWMD

The restoration project is proceeding with construction of 4 miles of trail on Torry Island.

Melaleuca Burn Update – SFWMD

SFWMD plans to complete a burn of the remaining dead melaleuca in the Moore Haven area. The project is dependent on water levels in the area.

5. Discussion Topics

Planting Vegetation on Wildlife Islands – FWC

FWC planted 300 pond apple and cypress seedlings on the wildlife islands created from the berm removal project.

Terrestrial Exotic Plant Treatment Update – USACE

AAM completed basal treatment of Brazilian pepper and Chinese tallow between Nubbin Slough and Henry Lock in January. AAM conducted a follow-up treatment of Brazilian pepper, lygodium and Australian pine along LD-3 levee in February and March.

Ritta Island Berm removal Update – SFWMD and FWC

FWC is in the final stages of awarding the contract for the Ritta Island berm removal project. The contractor may receive a notice to proceed next week. The burn plan to assist the berm removal project never took place due to poor weather conditions.

6. Open Forum:

Mechanical harvester work – USACE

The harvester removed tussock material in Old Moore Haven Canal in March.

Torpedograss Treatment update - SFWMD

The water level is too high for ground crews to treat torpedograss at this time.

Moonshine Bay Cattail Treatment – FWC

FWC is planning aerial treatments of small monoculture cattails in this area.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 19 May 2004 at 10:00 a.m. at the South Florida Operations Office in Clewiston, Florida.

The public comment period will be from 10:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Members of the public wishing to be placed on the agenda for the public comment period should contact Richard Bailey at 863-983-8101 ext. 243.